

“Dedication”



By J. Lloyd Spaulding ♦

Wherein for a Moment We Catch the Spirit of Iowa State

THERE was a vacant loneliness in the usually expectantly twittering dining room as I, having shouldered my tray, swung through the swinging pantry door and strode to the far side of the dining room, where, at a half a dozen tables, the handful of alumni of the classes of fifty years ago and over and a small group of faculty people, all guests of Dr. Hughes, president of Iowa State, sat reminiscing, awaiting the service.

It was an annual affair at commencement time, this supper at which Dr. Hughes entertained the graduates of fifty years past. Followed by two other inanimates in white jackets, I, an inconspicuous waiter of the regular dormitory force, was but a part of the background of white walls, reflecting the glowing lights, as we proceeded to our serving tables, deposited our trays, served the dinner plates, and retreated to our stations behind the tables.

THE meal dragged, and I, in between service errands, fell into my usually absent-minded state, dreaming of vacation, final grades, and the usual riff-raff of a student reverie, finding but little of interest in the pathetically decrepit assemblage of faded souls, most of whom, after much deliber-

tion and no little exasperating roaring on my part when serving drinks, requested, "A little weak tea, please." But however immune I may have been to the customary stacatto of feminine giggles, this table conversation carried bombshells which blasted away my lethargy. Suddenly these people began to hold a vivid significance for me.

It was a hearty laugh from the portly gentleman at the end.

"Yes, sir," he confided overflowing to his group, "when that railroad went through that part of Nebraska, I got in on the ground floor. Bought all the stock I could get my hands on. Folks thought I was crazy, but when the main line went through below us I sold out. Cleaned up some there. Put it all in good Nebraska land. I was worth a hundred thousand at one time; took it on the chin of late, though. Guess we all have, eh?"

He chuckled and his face radiated the approval he imagined he saw in the faces of his audience, each of whom listened as best he could, from the gracefully dignified matron at the head of the table to the frail little man who had propped himself sprawlingly upon his elbow and reinforced his ear phones with his flattened palm.

I WAS attracted to Dr. Hughes' table. A sober, bald-headed man whose patient, gray eyes told of tribulation, was speaking slowly and distinctly.

"We had a hundred and fifty votes for the resolution on the floor of the House, and yet—"

His voice faded, but the futile wave of his hands told the rest. Dr. Hughes, with a sympathetic smile, turned the course of the conversation.

"Be sure to see my hydro-electric plant when you get into Colorado. The latest thing; best equipment in the state. You remember Roger Timbresen?" The speaker, a slender man with steely blue eyes and a fringe of bristly white hair, turned to the Nebraska landlord. "He was quite a man in Nebraska about your time."

Nebraska nodded.

“Well, I bought him out. He dabbled in electric plants in Colorado for a while. He lost out in California real estate in '31. Don't believe he ever finished school here, did he? Yes, I have a real layout.” Thus for many minutes.

DR. HUGHES requested the last course, and, as I cleared my tables, these snatches of table talk fell into a gloriously comprehensible whole. By the time I had served the dainty brick ice cream, I had come to respect the whole group, from the portly braggart to the tiny little lady in the plain brown hat. Here was a remnant of that group of men and women, who, while building a nation in this West, laying her railroads, modernizing her agriculture, harnessing her streams, writing her laws, had made Iowa State famous, had made her name respected, so that we young cubs, those of us who thought at all, could thrill to sing,

“State College of Iowa, we give to thee
Our allegiance, the strength of our lives.”

The last of the meal was finished. Dr. Hughes arose to speak. With a few words of praise for the great men of Iowa State, the Knapps and Stantons, with whom these people had had living contacts, Dr. Hughes briefly outlined the role yet destined for these graduates of a half a century ago.

“In continuing the traditions of Iowa State College, we here feel that as an institution we are responsible in a larger sense than making only technically efficient individuals. True, we want competent agriculturalists, skillful chemists, and capable engineers, but beyond that we are interested in the more fundamental question concerning every student,—what kind of man or woman is he? So then I feel that it may well be your place, graduates of fifty years and more, to enhance and uphold that reputation, especially in your contacts with young people whom you encourage to come to school here. It is singularly our task. The men who graduate tomorrow

don't think of such things yet; the graduates of twenty years ago are too busy to bring this thing into tangible expression. It is your task to help us to keep alive those ideals for which you cherish your Alma Mater, and which you wish to preserve for your grandchildren."

THE meal was finished. With slow, deliberate steps of age the group left the dining room and the mystic incarnation of the spirit of Iowa State filed after them as the rattle of china again shattered the stillness of the dining room.

As I turned to my tables, a new weight settled on me. How about me? Fifty years hence? I shuddered, stiffened inwardly, and shouldered my tray again. Yes, I too, must carry on in that spirit!



Hospital Chains

By Cleone Brookins

THEY sounded like mad mobbers going by,
 Their voices raised in loud and husky cheers.
 I could not know, nor see the reason why
 They shouted in such wild elated tones,
 Or was it jeers?

I pressed the little button by my bed.
 Yea, gnashed my teeth until the night nurse came.
 "What's causing that fierce riot on the street?"
 "For shame—you should have known," she said.
 "We won the game."